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a paz é possível

INDONESIAN ELECTIONS IN EAST TIMOR

On the 23rd. of April elections will take place in East Timor, a former Portuguese colony, occupied by Indonesia since 1975. What credibility can be attributed to these elections?

1. The indonesian elections in East Timor take place in a militarily occupied territory.

   "It is not right that elections should take place in a territory occupied by the military and before the citizens of East Timor are in a position to freely choose their own destiny".

   (Ambassador Costa Lobo - Portuguese representative on the UNO Human Rights Commission - 9/2/87).

2. *"The lack of respect for the people's right to self-determination is accompanied by a systematic violation of other rights".*

   Among the fundamental rights violated by Indonesia in East Timor Ambassador Costa Lobo cited: *"the right to live and not be subjected to torture; individual liberty and security; freedom to circulate; freedom of expression and the right of assembly".*

   The holding of elections under these conditions cannot serve to legitimate the situation in East Timor, *"neither can it be considered as an exercise of the East Timorese' right to choose their own destiny".*

   (Ambassador Costa Lobo - Human Rights Commission at UNO - 9/2/87).

3. The Timorese should choose their representatives in the Indonesian Parliament, however they are not asked whether they wish to be represented there. To justify their decision, the Indonesians hold that the Timorese's option for integration has already been expressed by the Popular Regional Assembly of East Timor, *"duly elected"*, on the 31st. May of 1976. In fact, the Regional Assembly never was elected, but rather formed by 28 Timorese chosen by the Indonesian Armed Forces. Mario Carrascalão, Governor of East Timor, recently stated that the decision was taken by traditional chiefs, 'liurais' (Antara, 9/3/87). The contradictory accounts of how this choice was made is proof that it never took place.

4. In 1982 Indonesia organized, for the first time, elections in East Timor. The results announced by the Indonesian Government itself are the surest proof of how fraudulent these elections were: not only did they count more votes than the number of names on the electoral register, but the GOLKAR, the Government party, obtained 99,4% of the votes.

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5. In 1987 the conditions will be no different from those used previously. Since July 1986 intensive operations by the military and the police aim at terrorising the population.

Parliamentary missions from the United Kingdom and Australia sought permission to visit East Timor at the beginning of 1987; they were refused on the grounds that it *"would not be oportune at a time of preparation for elections"*.

The foreign journalists present in Indonesia to cover the elections and the permanent correspondents were not allowed to visit East Timor unless they obtained special authorization from the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Information ('Jakarta Post', 10/3/87).

6. As Timorese Parties are not recognized, the people of East Timor will only be able to elect their representatives from among the three authorized Indonesian Parties.

7. While the Timorese are invited to choose representatives for the Parliament, the Indonesian authorities are preparing to confer on the elections a special significance.

"Next April's elections will again prove that the East Timorese have recognized the fact that they also are part of Indonesia; they know that they really have integrated themselves into the Republic of Indonesia" (Ali Alatas - Indonesian Ambassador to UNO - 'Jakarta Post', 11/2/87).

8. The procedure used for the elections in East Timor will be different from that normally used in elections in Indonesia because it is considered a territory *"where contestation exists"*. The voter will not cast his voting paper in a single box, but he will have to place his voting slip in the box for the "chosen" party having, for this purpose, three boxes: one for each of the three competing parties. This procedure will eliminate the freedom of a secret ballot, even though some booths try to give an appearance of allowing a secret vote by providing curtains. These, which in 1982 were 20 cms. from the ground, allowed the election officials present in the room to control the voter by watching in which box he placed his vote.

9. There is no possibility of checking the results. No Timorese would dare to expose himself to this risk knowing that after the elections the Indonesian military will once again lay down the law, as they did before.

10. It is common practise in Indonesia for the various parties running for the election to present as head of their list a 'vote getter', a personality who will not likely occupy a seat in Parliament but is intended to attract votes. The head of GOLKAR's list in East Timor is the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs himself. If the Indonesian regime were really interested to get the Timorese's vote they would probably have chosen a Timorese. The choice of the MFA proves that Indonesia is more interested in international repercussions to the elections that in the manifestation of the will of the East Timor people.

11. The Portuguese Parliament, on 10th. April 1987, unanimously approved a motion in which they *"reaffirm the inalienable right to self-determination of the people of East Timor and declare illegal and illegitimate the electoral act which Indonesia is about to realise on the 23rd. of this month on Timorese territory, of which Portugal is the administrative power"*.